

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN
GRAY 81

How pleasant it was in the garden i And how
delightful people's emotions were!—much more delightful other
than their ideas, it seemed to him. One's own soul, and the
passions of one's friends—those were the fascinating things
in life. He pictured to himself with silent amusement the
tedious luncheon that he had missed by staying so long with Basil
Hallward. Had he gone to his aunt's he would have been
sure to have met Lord Goodbody there, and the whole conversation
would have been about the feeding of the poor, and the
necessity for model lodging-houses. Each class would have preached
the importance of those virtues, for whose exercise there
was no necessity in their own lives. The rich would have spoken
on the value of thrift, and the idle grown eloquent over the
dignity of labour. It was charming to have escaped all that! As he
thought of his aunt, an idea seemed to strike him. He turned
to Hallward, and said, "My dear fellow, I have just
remembered."

"Remembered what, Harry?"

"Where I heard the name of Dorian Gray."

"Where was it?" asked Hallward, with a slight
frown.

"Don't look so angry, Basil. It was at my
aunt, Lady Agatha's. She told me she had discovered a
wonderful young man, who was going to help her in the East End,
and that his name was Dorian Gray. I am bound to state
that she never told me he was good-looking. Women have no
appreciation of good looks; at least, good women have not. She
said that he was very earnest, and had a beautiful nature.
I at once pictured to myself a creature with spectacles and
lank hair, horribly freckled, and tramping about on huge
feet. I wish I had known it was your friend."

"I am very glad you didn't. Harry.**"

"Why?"

"I don't want you to meet him."

"You don't want me to meet him?"

"No."

"Mr. Dorian Gray is in the studio, sir," said
the butler,
coming into the garden.

"You must introduce me now/" cried Lord
Henry, laughing.

The painter turned to his servant, who stood
blinking in the sunlight. "Ask Mr. Gray to wait, Parker: I shall
be in a few moments," The man bowed, and went up the
walk.

Then he looked at Lord Henry. "Dorian Gray is
my dearest friend," he said. "He has a simple and a
beautiful nature. Your aunt was quite right in what she said of
him. Don't